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10 April 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Soviet Motivations for PLOWSHARE

1. Soviet interest in the peaceful uses of nuclear explosives (PNE) is motivated first and foremost by their belief that a PLOWSHARE program will definitely be of benefit to the Soviet national economy. They are also motivated by a desire to be on an equal footing with the United States in offering PNE services to other nations if such an international program comes to pass.

2. At the US-USSR bilateral PNE talks in Moscow in February 1970 and at the IAEA conference in Vienna in March 1970, the Soviets discussed a wide range of PNE experiments that they have performed or propose to perform in the future. These included oil and gas stimulation, dam and reservoir construction, canal construction, underground cavity formation, control of gas well fires, and mining operations. Based on our prior knowledge of their PNE program [redacted] it is clear that they presented a comprehensive and accurate picture of their past program. Judging from the scope of their experiments and their discussions of these experiments, the primary motivation for their PNE program is clearly its potential benefit to the national economy of the USSR.

3. The Soviets after years of silence chose to talk openly and comprehensively about their program at Moscow and Vienna probably for two reasons:

a. They desire to eventually reach an agreement with the US for the performance of cratering experiments (e.g., canal construction) within the framework of a modified Limited Test Ban Treaty.

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b. They realized that unless they presented the accomplishments of their program to the scientific community very soon they would lose out to the well-publicized US PLOWSHARE program in offering PNE services to the other nations.

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(9 April 1970)

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